

## **The National Scrapie Eradication Program – Your Regulatory Responsibilities as a Sheep or Goat Producer**

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Scrapie is a degenerative and eventually fatal brain disease of sheep and goats. It is in a class of diseases called Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs), which also include BSE in cattle and Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in elk and deer. Transmission of scrapie occurs primarily from an infected dam to her offspring and other lambs or kids exposed to the birth fluids, placenta, or bedding soiled by the birth fluids of the infected dam. Scrapie is estimated to cost the U.S. sheep industry over \$20 million a year and can potentially affect your flock.

In 2001, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) initiated an accelerated program to eradicate scrapie from the nation's sheep flocks and goat herds called the National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP). The program is coordinated by USDA and is a joint partnership effort among USDA, state governments, industry organizations, livestock marketers, slaughter facilities, and producers. The program has reduced the prevalence of scrapie by over 90% between 2003 and 2013, but to find and eliminate the last few cases of scrapie will require the continued cooperation of all entities involved in the sheep and goat industries.

### **Unique Identification of Sheep and Goats is Mandatory**

The NSEP is a mandatory program which requires all operations that house a sheep or goat to have a unique premise identification number, and most sheep and goats must be identified with an official USDA ear tag prior to leaving their place of birth that carries the premise identification number and an individual identification number for that animal. Records of USDA scrapie tag numbers received by each operation and USDA scrapie tag numbers of animals sold and acquired must be kept for five years by each sheep and goat operation.

Official USDA scrapie ear tags and applicators are available free of charge from USDA. To apply for your premise identification number and to obtain free official ear tags, call **866-USDA-TAG (866-873-2824)**. This single number for the entire United States will automatically go to the appropriate office in your state.

According to USDA regulations, the following animals need to be identified:

- All sheep, except those going directly to slaughter as lambs, need to have an official ear tag or other official identification (tattoos are allowed as an official identification by some states) when they leave the farm or change ownership.
- Sexually intact goats before being transported to a show, fair, petting zoo or exhibition (many shows require all goats to be tagged).
- Registered goats, goats used for milk production and any goat housed or pastured with sheep must be officially identified before a change of ownership (many states require official identification for other types of goats also).

Some states require all sheep and goats to be officially identified for intrastate movement, and some states exempt certain classes of sheep and/or goats. It is the producer's responsibility to know and adhere to state requirements for your respective state and, if moving out of state, to know and adhere to the federal requirements and those of the states to where animals are being moved. Learn more about national and specific state's scrapie identification requirements at [www.eradicatescrapie.org](http://www.eradicatescrapie.org). **In order to avoid non-compliance with either Federal or State regulations, producers should place an official USDA scrapie identification ear tag in every sheep and goat that leaves their farm, even if the animal is returning to the farm.**

Requirements for scrapie identification in Wisconsin and Minnesota are:

#### Wisconsin

All sheep and goats must have official individual identification prior to moving off the premises of origin except animals under 12 months of age that are either neutered OR going directly to a slaughtering establishment for slaughter. (Most markets are not slaughter establishments.)

All sheep and goats imported into Wisconsin must have official individual identification, regardless of age. Except for those going directly to a slaughtering establishment for slaughter, all sheep and goats imported into Wisconsin must also have a certificate of veterinary inspection. Animals from some states or regions may also need import permits. Complete and up-to-date information is available at

[http://datcp.wi.gov/Animals/Animal\\_Movement/Sheep\\_Goats/index.aspx](http://datcp.wi.gov/Animals/Animal_Movement/Sheep_Goats/index.aspx) or by contacting:

Melinda Young, Wisconsin Animal Health Import Coordinator

Ph: 608-224-4874

E-mail: [DATCPAnimalImports@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPAnimalImports@wisconsin.gov)

USDA/APHIS/VS Office

Doris Olander

Ph: 608-662-0600

E-mail: [doris.olander@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:doris.olander@aphis.usda.gov)

#### Minnesota

All sheep and goats—except animals entering slaughter channels or going to a terminal feedlot—must have an official ear tag upon movement from the flock to another location and before being commingled with sheep and goats from other flocks. Complete information is available by contacting:

Dr William L. Hartmann, SV

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Much of the information for this article was taken from the USDA scrapie web site:  
[http://nvap.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/animal\\_diseases/scrapie/](http://nvap.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_diseases/scrapie/).